

**PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2002 BUDGET REQUEST
FOR THE FOREST SERVICE**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS
FIRST SESSION
TO CONDUCT OVERSIGHT ON THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE
FISCAL YEAR 2002 BUDGET

MAY 8, 2001



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PROPOSED FISCAL YEAR 2002 BUDGET REQUEST FOR THE FOREST SERVICE

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2001

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:30 p.m. in room SD-366, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Larry E. Craig presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. LARRY E. CRAIG, U.S. SENATOR FROM IDAHO

Senator CRAIG. The Committee on Energy and Natural Resources will be in session. Good afternoon, everyone. Today the committee will review the fiscal year 2002 budget proposal by the U.S. Forest Service. The full committee chairman, Frank Murkowski, is delayed. In his stead, I will chair the hearing until he arrives.

Today's hearing also marks an opportunity, I think, for the committee to hear from the new Chief of the U.S. Forest Service, Dale Bosworth. I want to personally welcome you, Dale, to the committee, congratulate you on your appointment and state, without reservation, that I, and I think a good many on this committee, look forward to working with you.

Dale was previously a regional forester in Region I, which covers northern Idaho and, before, the regional forester in Region IV, which happened to cover southern Idaho. As he is a 1966 graduate of the University of Idaho, I believe that the Gem State can stake a very good claim, I would trust, on his affections. Only time will tell.

[Laughter.]

Senator CRAIG. It is also worthy to note that Dale is a second-generation Forest Service employee. The agency's ethos and principles run deep in the Bosworth household. When Dale was appointed last month, I commended the President for restoring continuity to the Forest Service decision-making by selecting a chief from among the agency's scientists and resource managers.

I note that, until recently, the Forest Service was unique among government agencies in eschewing political patronage. Any entry-level Forest Service employee qualified and trained in natural-resource science and conservation, and by the merit of their own hard work, could strive to excel and dream to someday become the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. Though you, Dale, the President, I think, has restored that dream for over 33,000 employees of the U.S. Forest Service, and I am eager to work with you to convert

that dream into an expanding reality that returns decision-making to the professionals that have created a system of national forests that are both the envy of the world and an important contributor to the world's resource needs. Your appointment is a clear step toward that reality.

With respect to the fiscal year 2002 budget proposal, I concur with the administration's descriptions of it as a transition budget with programs proposed for funding the essential fiscal year 2001 levels. We will be working with the Chief, the administration, and the appropriations committees to shape that transition as we move through this session of Congress.

There is, however, an important exception in the general overview, and that is a \$660 million reduction in the Wildfire Management Account. That consists of a 32 percent reduction in this account. The fiscal year 2002 request is a significant increase over the fiscal year 2001 request, of course, predated the fires of the summer of 2000.

In light of last year's fire season, we increased this account significantly. In anticipation of another difficult fire season upcoming and a backlog of fuel reduction and watershed rehabilitation needs, I believe it is inevitable that we will need to restore most, if not all, of the reductions from the fiscal year 2001 enacted budget.

I look forward to working with my colleagues and the administration on this important task. The chairman of the full committee has just arrived.

Senator Murkowski.

[A prepared statement from Senator Johnson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. TIM JOHNSON, U.S. SENATOR FROM SOUTH DAKOTA

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased that we are holding this hearing today on the Fiscal Year 2002 budget proposal for the U.S. Forest Service. Last year was a difficult year for our nation's forests. Wildfires raged through much of the western forests, leaving major damage that is still being cleaned up. The effects are still being felt in the Black Hills of South Dakota. The Forest Service has performed admirably in responding to the situation and they should be commended. Congress also did its part by enacting an emergency package that will help with the rehabilitation and future preparation efforts.

To this end, I am pleased to see that many of the programs that will help to restore the health of the forests will receive adequate funding. But I am concerned about a few important programs that are slated to receive reductions and I think these plans need to be reviewed. The intent of Congress that was demonstrated in the passage of the emergency funding last year to address the fires across the west must be carried out so that the funds are properly allocated. I don't believe that Congress anticipated that any of the programs would be reduced when the emergency legislation was passed last year.

In particular, I am concerned that plans to severely cut Restoration and Rehabilitation funding would set back the progress that has been made over the last several months. This program goes a long way towards restoring the soil and natural growth of the forests. The Chief of the Forest Service stated last week that demand for the use of the projects in this program are two to three times than the resources that are allocated for it.

I am also opposed to the proposal to eliminate funding for the pest management contingency fund. Pine beetles have infected forests in the Black Hills and there have been ongoing efforts to combat their effects. The 10,000 acre Beaver Park area of the Black Hills National Forest is currently infested by the Pine Beetle and is the ideal habitat for this devastating bug. Aerial surveys last year revealed that up to 35,000 trees in the Beaver Park area have been infested by beetles in the last four years. Some have estimated that number will double this year. This will result in the possible loss of over a million board feet of timber.

Because the Beaver Park area is designated as a roadless area, the Forest Service (USFS) is prohibited from entering the Beaver Park area and eliminating the Pine Beetle, but containing the infested area and protecting private property needs to be a top priority of the USFS. Pine Beetle outbreaks may be acceptable in a designated roadless area, but are not acceptable when they affect private lands. In order to protect our valuable natural resource, an insecticide needs to be applied to private timber by June. Eliminating the pest management contingency fund will make this task far more difficult and we should find a way to support this program.

In addition to these concerns, I am also leading efforts to secure funding for a new Rocky Mountain Research Station near Rapid City, SD. The research station would house a new laboratory and facilities that would provide invaluable research on the unique natural resources of the central and northern Great Plains. The current setting of the lab is outdated but has performed important work for the Forest Service. Its focus on the ecosystems of the prairies and forests of the Great Plains is unique. However, it cannot continue its valuable contributions in its current location. As a member of the Appropriations Committee, I am making this a priority this year and would like to see funding allocated for design of the proposed site.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this hearing today and I look forward to working with the Forest Service on these projects.

STATEMENT OF HON. FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, U.S. SENATOR FROM ALASKA

Senator MURKOWSKI. Thank you very much, Senator Craig. And let me join our panel in welcoming Mr. Bosworth and congratulate you as the 15th, I believe, Chief of the National Forest Service. I think in the minds of many of the constituents in my State of Alaska, and certainly in the West, you have been entrusted with perhaps more power than a just man should have or that a sane man would want; but nevertheless, you have been given a grave responsibility.

It has been written somewhere along the way that the—authority without wisdom is like a heavy axe without an edge. And over the last years, many of us who represent resource-dependent communities feel like we have been worked over with a very blunt instrument. But we are still alive and well and looking eagerly to make a responsible comeback through your assistance and efforts and contribution.

Now, in choosing you, I think the President has certainly selected a talented and experienced resource professional. And I want to emphasize “resource professional.” You, sir, have had a career in forest-service management. You know what’s good for forest health, and I think that is the prime responsibility for the Chief of the Forest Service.

And when we talk about forest health, we are talking about making decisions—decisions on what’s good for forest health. One of the things that you and I, in our conversation the other day—and I made the comparison—and perhaps it’s an invalid comparison, but it represents action, vis-à-vis inaction. You know, when we had the mad-cow disease in Europe, they didn’t waste any time making decisions about what to do. They removed the cows to stop the epidemic. Yet within the Forest Service, over this last management scheme, we found an inability to make decisions on forest health, whether it be the aftermath of fires or whether it be associated with infestation.

The Forest Service seems to have adopted a policy where they will call a town-hall meeting and try and generate a consensus and be bound by the consensus, as opposed to the professionals within

the Forest Service making a recommendation as to what's good for forest health, sticking to it, and making a decision. And I have been very, very frustrated in the inability of the management system within the Forest Service to make conscientious decisions based on forest health. When we're ill, what do we do? We go to the best professional physician we can find for treatment. When the forest is ill, it deserves the best forest management available. It deserves the evaluation by professionals, such as yourself, that have spent a lifetime in the study of the health of the forest. And if we can't depend on your recommendations, then I question just whose recommendation we can depend on. You have the trust, of course, of the public land.

You know, I think it's somewhat ironic, Mr. Chairman, that the very day of your appointment, when it was announced, we had a government executive magazine issuing a government management report card. This graded the Federal agencies on their management performance, which I think is appropriate, and the Forest Service was almost at the bottom of the list of the agencies evaluated with what they called "symptomatic management weakness." Now, I'm not going to ask you what that means now, but I would appreciate it if you would address it in your response and your statement to the record, because I think it necessitates corrective action in responding to system management weakness—or systematic management weakness and what you're going to do about it.

I think this survey stands in sharp contrast to similar government-agency surveys and studies done in—well, the 1960's, back in the 1970's and in the 1980's—in which the Forest Service previously scored rather high marks.

So based on your testimony today, Mr. Bosworth, your professional commitment to public service, I believe that you are the right person in the right place at the right time to restore both the health of the national forest reputation and the health of our national forests, as well, and I certainly look forward to working with you.

Senator CRAIG. Frank, thank you very much. Now let me turn to Senator Bingaman, who is the ranking member of the full committee.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF BINGAMAN, U.S. SENATOR
FROM NEW MEXICO**

Senator BINGAMAN. Thank you very much. Welcome, Chief Bosworth, and your colleagues. Let me mention four areas that I have particular concern and just—I'm sure you can address these in your comments or during the question-and-answer.

First, I'm concerned that the budget requests dramatic cuts in the funding for the burned-area restoration and rehabilitation of national forests. I think the—last year's level was \$142 million. The proposal is to go to \$3 million this year, as I read the budget. I may be wrong about that. If I am, please correct me. These are important programs for many of the communities in my State where erosion and mudslides are a series issue. Ruidoso comes to mind as one community where a very severe fire was suffered last year. And I know that in your written testimony, you make reference—I think this is an exact quote—"to the lands that have

been blackened by wildfire throughout the country to healthy and productive condition will require significant investment over many years." I guess I'm concerned that I don't see that reflected in the budget, that commitment to a significant investment.

Second, the budget does maintain funding for the hazardous-fuels reduction—to reduce the fire risk, as I understand it, and I appreciate that—but I am concerned about the relatively small percentage of projects—I gather about a third of the projects—that will actually take place in this urban/wild-land interface. It would seem to me we could do better. We could get more of that money directed toward the area where the risk is the greatest, and I hope we can discuss that.

A third point is: I'm disappointed that we only have \$2 million requested for—within existing programs for the Youth Conservation Corps. This is the same level as last year. I've thought for several years now that this is an important program. There was a period in our history where it was funded at a very high level. That was prior to the Reagan administration. I would like us very much to look at that and see if we—if that's not an area that we could do better in.

And finally, the funding that is proposed for assistance with the management of the Baca Ranch in my own State of New Mexico, this is an area that just was acquired last year by the Federal Government and the Forest Service. Funding, as I understand it, is inadequate to allow the area to be open to the public. I think we would need to increase that funding, perhaps by another million dollars or so.

So those are four areas I wanted to particularly highlight and I look forward to your testimony. Thank you.

Senator CRAIG. Jeff, thank you very much.

Senator Craig Thomas.

STATEMENT OF HON. CRAIG THOMAS, U.S. SENATOR FROM WYOMING

Senator THOMAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Welcome. Chief. We're delighted to have you here and pleased that you're doing what you're doing. I will just take a second.

We need, I think, obviously, to move towards more access to public lands. That's what they're for, is to protect the environment and yet have access and use them. I think we need to take a long look, obviously, at the roadless situation. And, frankly, having participated in some of those meetings, if you're going to do something like that with public input, it has to be done quite differently, in my view, than was the roadless thing that was there.

Fire plans—obviously something major for us—I hope we take a lot of—more look at prevention and thinning and those kinds of things—management. Having been in a couple of forest fires things, the number of people that are there, it seems to me, is not necessarily the most important issue in terms of fire control.

Accountability—I think we all have to work at that. There have been a number of forest plans, particularly the Black Hills and in Wyoming, where a relatively small part of the plan was ever accomplished. And I think it is important that, if we're going to have planning—and particularly as we can have it on forest plans, lo-

cally—input, then we have to have some accountability as—in accomplishing those kinds of things.

So I look forward to working with you and am delighted you're here.

Senator CRAIG. Craig, thank you. Now let me turn to Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon. I think, Chief Bosworth, Ron and I last year and for the last several years—I chairing the Forestry Committee; he, being the ranking member with me on the subcommittee—have demonstrated that good forest policy can be bipartisan, and we have worked hard to make that happen, and we have in many instances and will continue to do so, with your help and assistance. Senator Wyden.

**STATEMENT OF HON. RON WYDEN, U.S. SENATOR
FROM OREGON**

Senator WYDEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate your holding the hearing. And let me echo your point. We have shown it can be bipartisan. We're going to insist that it's bipartisan, because it's clear that's the only way you make progress.

Chief, I'll be very brief. First, it seems to me that people, property, and the environment are going to get hurt if the Fire Plan's restoration funds aren't restored. I think what you're hearing today, on a bipartisan basis, is: we're going to restore those monies, because the consequences—the alternatives—are just unacceptable.

The reason I feel so strongly about this is that I'm convinced that fire plans are not just about fighting existing fires, but they're about taking steps to restore fires as part of the forest health regime so the forests are not so susceptible to fire devastation in the future. We hope you will be a force within the administration to work with us to try to turn this around so that we can have the kind of comprehensive approach that Senator Craig and I have sought on so many issues.

The only other point that I would want to mention is, as you know, the County Payments bill was enacted last year. It is the first time a separate forestry bill went to the floor of the U.S. Senate in almost 20 years. The first time. And that money is supposed to get out across the country, beginning this fall, and we're very concerned that it be implemented expeditiously and in line with what was intended. This is another area where Senator Craig and I teamed up, with the help of Senator Bingaman and Senator Murkowski and others, and I'm anxious to hear your views on the implementation of that important law.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CRAIG. Ron, thank you. The Chief, today, is accompanied by Randall Phillips, Deputy Chief, Programs and Legislation, and Hank Kashdan, Director of Programs and Budget Analysis. Chief Bosworth, welcome before the committee.

Oh, I'm sorry. One moment. We have just been joined by Senator John Kyl. John, do you have any opening comments?

Senator KYL. Mr. Chairman, I'd like to hear from the witness. Obviously, I want to talk about the forest health initiatives, but I'm sure that will be addressed.

Senator CRAIG. Fine, thank you. Please proceed, Dale.

STATEMENT OF DALE N. BOSWORTH, CHIEF, FOREST SERVICE, ACCOMPANIED BY RANDALL PHILLIPS AND HANK KASHDAN

Chief BOSWORTH. Thank you. Mr. Chairman and Mr. Bingaman and members of the committee, it is a privilege to be here today to talk about the President's budget for the Forest Service for fiscal year 2002. I would also like to say that I've only been chief now for a short period of time, so it's a particular honor to have this opportunity. Thank you.

I'd like to express my gratitude to Secretary Ann Veneman for her confidence in me. And particularly, I would like to thank the employees of the Forest Service who have expressed a lot of encouragement and support to me. They're an outstanding group of employees, and I really do appreciate them. They have a lot of skill and a lot of ability.

Today, I want to talk about, particularly, three things. I want to talk about the priorities that I'm going to look at during my transition and into the next several months; I want to talk about the National Fire Plan; and I want to talk about accountability. Accountability was one of the items in the Government Performance Report, the Forest Service did not do well in. I think we had a "D" rating in that performance report. With that rating, I would acknowledge that while there are problems with financial management, I would also recognize that the agency is doing something about it, so I'll talk a little bit more about that as I go through my remarks.

The first thing, in terms of the priorities and the things I'm going to be looking at during the transition, one of the most important things we need to be focusing on is getting work done on the ground. I believe that the foundation of the Forest Service's credibility over the years has been our ability to do work on the ground. People don't expect their tax dollars to go into analysis and into paperwork; they expect to see something happen out in the woods. Therefore, we need to reestablish the connection between our national headquarters and our field offices, and I want to put a lot of emphasis and a lot of time into that. We need to make sure that the policies and initiatives that we take on at the national level facilitate getting work done on the ground and don't hinder getting that work done.

One of the Forest Service's greatest strengths has been the ability of its line officers to make decisions and implement decisions taking local people's needs into account, work with the local communities, and come out with solutions and implement those jobs on the ground. We need to make sure that we continue or increase the ability of those local line officers. I am concerned that that ability has been somewhat limited in the last few years, and I think we need to reestablish it. I think we have to recognize that when you look at 192 million acres of national forest land, that every acre is not the same, and they are different from one community to another, and different from one national forest to another. Therefore, it doesn't work to have a one-size-fits-all solution to all of those different chunks of land. The bottom line is: we need to empower line officers to make and implement these decisions.

We need to look at our organizational structure, both at our headquarters, as well as throughout the organization, to make sure that it is working for us the way it needs to be working for us. We need to make sure that the folks in the field have access to the people at the national office. I want to make sure that I have an open-door policy, that when district rangers in the field come in, that they can stop and talk to me, and we can exchange viewpoints. I also want the associate chiefs and deputy chiefs to have that same open door with people from the field.

I think we also need to place a higher priority on our review system in the Forest Service, where we are going—where we set more general policies. Then go out and do reviews in the field to see whether or not the policies are working and whether people are getting the job done the way they're supposed to. My view would be to give more general policies and then follow up with an oversight-and-accountability process.

A problem for us has been the amount of dollars that we have taken off the top that keeps dollars from getting to the ground. We need to assess our strategic goals and our objectives and then make sure that the funds that we're holding in our headquarters office are absolutely essential to accomplishing the mission of the agency. We have begun an assessment of the off-the-top dollars, and we're looking at—almost line-by-line, and I'm going to be personally involved—if we can reduce the amount that we are taking off the top.

Another issue and concern is the aging of our workforce. About 32 percent of our workforce is going to be eligible for retirement in the next five years. As those people with that experience go out the door, that will leave a void. We need to make sure that we are recruiting the best and brightest people into the agency and that we have some of the old hands still around to help mentor those younger people coming in, teaching them the ropes and giving them the same opportunities most of us had when we came into the Forest Service. I think we have an unprecedented opportunity because, through the National Fire Plan, a number of new people with different kinds of skills and talents will be added to our workforce, and I think it will make a big difference.

The National Fire Plan is a very, very high priority. The restoration that we're doing in the burned-over areas—as one of you mentioned, the blackened areas we had last year—do require some investment, and it was very helpful getting the dollars that we got for this fiscal year. We have set priorities and we are putting those dollars into the places where we can make the biggest difference, but we're going to continue to need to respond to the ever-increasing presence of homes in wild-land/urban interface and make sure that we're doing the kind of work that needs to be done, in terms of fuels management, to lessen the harsh impacts of wildfire around communities.

The National Fire Plan budget proposed by the President is about \$1.3 billion. That will allow us to continue investments to reduce the threat and the severity of wildfire in the wild-land/urban interface. I know that it appears to a lot of people to be very, very expensive, and it is expensive; but I think when you compare it with the amount of dollars that it would take to suppress wildfire

and to restore blackened lands in the future if we don't put in that kind of investment, it seems very, very reasonable.

I think the National Fire Plan is a good example of what can be done when you get good cooperation between the administration and the Congress. I think it does a very good job of balancing forest restoration and community protection. I'm looking forward to those kinds of opportunities to work together for other kinds of national forest management policies in the Forest Service to see if we can't achieve that same kind of balance.

Accountability is a big issue in our agency, and we have had some difficulty with our financial management; but we have put a fair amount of emphasis on it over the last two or three years. I think my predecessor, Chief Dombeck, did a good job in building the framework, and we just need to continue on that path and get a clean audit opinion. And we're going to continue to work hard to accomplish that.

Again, I think accountability is more than just having good financial accountability. It also means delivering on performance expectations. We are going to be putting a lot of effort into making sure that what we say is what we actually end up doing. We need to deliver on our program commitments. Starting in 2003, we expect to have a basis for a field-based budget which I think will help us be more assured that we will be able to make the expectations that are delivered in our commitments that we make.

I know that one area of concern has been the forest products and our delivery of forest products. And it appears to be a reduction in our target. I think that for us to be accountable and to deliver on our expectations, we need to first be very realistic. I think that the actual situation in the Forest Service today is that some of our capability to deliver has been diminished over the last several years, and we need to build that back up again. In fiscal year 2000-2001, we were expected to offer about 3.6 billion board feet; but in fiscal year 2000, we actually sold 1.7 billion board feet. We expect to offer a similar level this year. For fiscal year 2002, we've looked very closely at our capability, and we estimate that the level we will be able to produce will be around the same as in fiscal year 2001.

We need to be looking at our programs and looking at our deficiencies. We need to build our capability and look for future opportunities so that we can increase the production from national forest to both restore and protect the forest and deliver the products. I think this is going to take several years to accomplish that, but I believe it is doable, and I believe that it will lead to healthier forests and more productive forests.

Stewardship contracting is an area that we're experimenting with, since we got the authority through Congress a couple of years ago to try. I think that those kinds of experiments, stewardship projects, give us a model approach toward trying different ways to get the job done on the ground, and I am looking forward to inviting folks out to see some of the actual accomplishments on the ground as they get completed. I think it is an excellent tool for us to experiment with to accomplish integrated resource management objectives. Accountability for production, I think, also has to take into account non-industrial private lands, and our State and pri-

vate forestry programs are going to continue to emphasize cooperation to enhance stewardship.

I've been concerned about our range allotments. We've fallen behind in our environmental analysis. We're looking at what the factors were that contributed to that shortfall, and we will be developing some actions, or coming up with some more realistic schedules, as far as meeting the shortfall.

We also need to be accountable for the quality of recreation that we deliver. Over 70 percent of the U.S. population lives very near a national forest or a national grassland, and we need to erase the maintenance backlog, both in our recreation facilities and roads so that we can provide quality recreation opportunities. We would like to work with you to develop some innovative solutions, because I don't think getting more dollars appropriated is going to be the total answer. I think reauthorization of the recreation fee demo would help a lot.

So, in conclusion, I have heard Secretary Veneman say very clearly that she would like the Forest Service to be a world-class provider of goods and services, and I think our agency is capable of being a world-class provider. I'm going to personally be devoting some attention to achieving that goal.

Once again, I want to say that I'm honored to be here, and I look forward to working with you, and I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

[The prepared statement of Chief Bosworth follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DALE N. BOSWORTH, CHIEF, FOREST SERVICE

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Bingaman, and members of the Committee, it is a great privilege to be here today to talk about the President's budget for the Forest Service in fiscal year 2002. Let me also say, as Chief of the Forest Service for only a short while, I am deeply honored to have this opportunity.

First, I want to express my gratitude to Secretary Veneman for her confidence in me, and to say thank you to the dedicated, hard working employees of the Forest Service for their support and encouragement. Let me also express my appreciation in advance to you Mr. Chairman, to you Mr. Bingaman, and members of the Committee for working with the Forest Service and me during this transition.

I would like to start my testimony by saying a few words about myself and my long-time commitment to the Forest Service. I have worked in the Forest Service for 35 years. I am what in the agency is often called a "Forest Service brat," a title I inherited because my father was also a leader in the agency. It is fair to say I have a lifetime of being part of the Forest Service culture, traditions, and debates about management of America's forests and rangelands. Coming from this background, I am truly humbled by the duties entrusted in me as Chief and I am eager to lead this agency through challenging times.

In my testimony today, I will talk about three areas of emphasis. First, I will discuss my priorities in the short term as the agency transitions its leadership. Second, I will discuss the National Fire Plan and how its strong focus on protecting communities from the dangers of catastrophic fire represents a broader focus on how, in general, we need to manage the Nation's forests and rangelands to protect communities and natural resources, and provide services and products on a sustainable basis. Third, I will discuss agency accountability. I recall about two years ago, then House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee Chairman Ralph Regula saying, "Accountability is more than simply good accounting." I couldn't agree more. I will talk about accountability not only in the implementation of financial reforms, but also from the standpoint of delivering on agency performance commitments. In doing so, I will need to be perfectly candid about the immediate capability of the Forest Service to meet expectations of performance in two key programs.

SHORT-TERM PRIORITIES

Mr. Chairman, as a Regional Forester in two regions over the past 7 years, and in many other positions in the Forest Service, I have developed an appreciation for how the job being performed "on-the-ground" by our employees is the foundation of our credibility with the public. This applies to researchers, employees on the National Forests, and employees who provide support to State, local, Tribal and international stakeholders. It is the responsibility of employees in the national headquarters and at the regional offices to ensure the best possible support is given to that "on-the-ground" job. Over the next several months, I want to emphasize what I think is essential in establishing a "reconnection" between the headquarters and the field. I want to make sure that ongoing initiatives to improve financial compliance and track natural resource information do not unintentionally hinder employees from performing the "on-the-ground" work. This assessment of ongoing initiatives does not alter the Agency's commitment to moving forward our commitment to financial accountability.

One of the greatest strengths of the Forest Service is the ability of line officers at the forest and ranger district levels to make and implement decisions that take local community needs into account. I am concerned that in recent years this ability has been limited by an over-reliance on top-down initiatives that have dis-empowered local decision making, and have prevented the greatest possible funding from reaching the field unit level. I firmly believe that each field unit has different needs. A single management philosophy cannot produce healthy forests and rangelands that provide opportunities to deliver goods and services across the wide array of environments in which our National Forests and Rangelands exist.

In the immediate future, I want to work closely with Secretary Veneman to assess recent initiatives to make sure the ability to manage and protect our diverse resources is not adversely affected. We will assess the agency's strategic goals and objectives to ensure full compatibility with local forest plans and priorities. To get the agency's work done "on-the-ground", it is critical to ensure funds held at the headquarters and regional levels are only those funds that are essential to accomplishing our mission. In recent years the amount of funds taken "off the top" has grown to unprecedented levels. While the majority of this funding ultimately goes to the field, too much does not. Too much of this money does not go to projects that directly support "on-the-ground" accomplishments. Only just recently the Forest Service, with help from field line officers, began the most intensive screening of this "off the top" funding in years. I will personally make the final decision on funds held at the headquarters level.

I also intend to take a close look at the organizational leadership structure of the Forest Service. I want to make sure our line officers are empowered to make and implement natural resource management decisions at the field level, in the best tradition of our decentralized organization, while assuring that systems used in the field meet best business practices and are consistent and comply with national laws, regulations, and policies. I have already taken steps to realign the reporting structure of our Regional Foresters and Station Directors, so they have the best possible access to me, as Chief, and I assure you I will place priority emphasis on providing the best oversight possible for administration of the agency.

An issue that concerns me greatly is often called "graying of the workforce." In the next 5 years 32 percent of the workforce will be eligible for retirement. Only 9 years ago, the Forest Service had 643 permanent employees less than 25 years of age. At the end of calendar year 2000, we had only 137 employees under 25. At the same time, the number of employees over 50 has climbed from 7,814 in 1992 to 10,232 today. My fellow employees and I consider working for the Forest Service to be a privilege and an honor. I want this agency to be an employer of choice. Primarily as a result of implementing the National Fire Plan, for the first time in a long time, the Forest Service will be recruiting large numbers of new employees who will become leaders in the Forest Service by the end of this decade. We have an unprecedented opportunity to emphasize recruitment of a workforce that reflects America's broad diversity and provides the appropriate mix of skills and talents needed by the agency. Having described the value of new hires, let me also emphasize the importance of an appropriate balance of staff to other resources. This includes hiring full-time and temporary Forest Service employees to replace the large number of employees expected to retire in the near future. It also includes partnering with businesses, corporations, and other groups to accomplish important on-the-ground work and to increase the agency's ability to respond to local needs through increased local employment and community involvement. I intend to personally review and monitor how we balance the recruitment of our workforce and

future leaders, and the use of local businesses and the private sector. Only through building an effective organization can we rise to meet the challenges of the future.

NATIONAL FIRE PLAN

As a Regional Forester, I personally witnessed the catastrophic wildland fire that occurred in the Bitterroot Mountains of Montana last year. The cost to restore the lands in the Bitterroot, and other lands blackened by wildfire throughout the country, to a healthy and productive condition will require significant investments over many years. Further, there will continue to be a need to respond to the ever-increasing presence of people in the wildland-urban interface. We must continually assess how we invest to protect communities and resources, how we ensure our readiness to suppress wildland fire where necessary and manage fire where it benefits the land, and how we enable effective cooperative fire suppression and management among Federal, State, Tribal, and local organizations.

Last year, the Forest Service spent \$1.1 billion dollars for fire suppression. The President's budget in FY 2002 provides \$1.3 billion in support of the National Fire Plan. This will allow the Forest Service to continue investments to reduce the threat and severity of wildland fire over the long term. Investing in firefighting and hazardous fuel reduction capability will lead to healthy, restored, fire-adapted ecosystems. While these investments may appear to be expensive, the annual cost of hazardous fuel reduction won't approach anywhere near the costs of catastrophic wildland fire suppression, the subsequent restoration of damaged lands, and the costs to the people living in or adjacent to our forests who could lose their homes, livelihoods, or even a loved one. The good news is that with a cohesive investment, costs can be reduced in the long term. Beginning with the programs implemented by the National Fire Plan we can develop a long-term strategy to provide healthy forests resistant to wildland fire, insects, diseases, and noxious weeds that provide a sustainable flow of products and services.

The National Fire Plan is a good example of what can be achieved when Congress and the Administration work together. The Plan allows the Forest Service to improve the health of our Nation's forests by providing the resources needed to protect communities and natural resources from wildland fires and invasive species. Additionally, through our outstanding Research and State and Private Forestry programs, the Fire Plan provides funding to develop technologies that will increase the use of forest products by communities and industry. These programs have the potential to make it economically beneficial for the Forest Service and private industry to restore the health of the land by increasing the value and use of traditionally non- or low-valued forest products. The balancing process of restoring forests and protecting communities will integrate local community employment and expanding local economic capacity with the generation of forest and range products to accomplish restoration objectives. The President's budget in fiscal year 2002 provides the emphasis and funding needed to integrate the National Fire Plan with the full array of agency programs. I look forward to working with you to extend this type of balanced policy to all aspects of Forest Service natural resource management.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Protecting communities and restoring forests and rangelands under the National Fire Plan will require that the Forest Service be held accountable for program accomplishment. Accountability has been a significant emphasis of the agency for the past three years. Former Chief Mike Dombeck did a great job of building the framework to restore the financial integrity of the agency. Under the direction of Secretary Veneman, we will continue on the path of bringing our financial management and accounting of agency assets into full compliance with the best business management standards. We will continue our progress towards obtaining a clean audit opinion.

However, as I mentioned earlier, being accountable is much more than having good financial accountability. It is delivering on program commitments. The President's budget for fiscal year 2002 continues what we began in fiscal year 2001. We are presenting our budget based on our capability to perform. Our budget is displayed in terms of activity and output measures that directly correlate to performance outcomes. These measures will, for the first time, be the basis for a field-based budget, which we are implementing in fiscal year 2003. These measures will form the core structure of our accounting system and will ensure consistency throughout the agency's budget formulation, presentation and accounting process. This structure will allow us to emphasize performance as an integral part of budget requests.

Let me focus on areas of performance accountability that I know concern many members of this Committee. The President's budget for fiscal year 2002 proposes

what may appear to be a significant reduction in the “target” for forest product accomplishment. To be accountable for performance, we must first be realistic about our capability. Mr. Chairman, in the area of forest products, because of policy emphasis over the past eight years, the Forest Service’s capability has been reduced. Unfortunately, this has not been adequately reflected in past communication to Congress. For example, in fiscal years 2000 and 2001 the agency was expected to offer 3.6 billion board feet (bbf) of timber volume. In reality the agency offered only 1.7 bbf in fiscal year 2000 and expects, at best, to offer a similar level in fiscal year 2001. For fiscal year 2002 we have closely assessed our capability based on a variety of factors, including; the costs and time to navigate the complex appeals and litigation processes, the need for additional work directly attributable to legal decisions, the virtual elimination of a forest product pipeline, and the past inability of the Agency to view forest product production as an integral aspect of protecting and improving forest health. Mr. Chairman, we estimate that in fiscal year 2002 the forest product offer level will be somewhere in the neighborhood of the FY 2001 level.

This lower forest products estimate is not good for forest communities and it is not good for the environment. The lower levels may stress the already struggling natural resource dependent economies of many of our nation’s forest communities. It also is not adequate to reduce the extraordinary amount of woody material contained in many parts of the National Forests to traditional historic conditions. Active vegetative management actions, including timber harvesting can restore forest ecosystem health, reduce invasive species, and reduce the risks of catastrophic fires.

With this in mind, I believe being completely honest about capability issues such as this is an essential element of being accountable. In this fiscal year we will assess our programs to determine future opportunities as to how we can target programs and resources to increase the production of forest products, especially in areas as a means of restoring and protecting forest health. It may take several years to reach an increased level. Let me also make clear that such increases may not approach the levels or produce the revenue experienced in the late 1980’s. However, the end result will be healthier, more productive forests.

Increases in forest products from the National Forests will require full recognition that land health and the production of goods and services are interwoven and entirely compatible. Consistent with these combined goals, we must develop new methods for compatible use of renewable resources. We will closely assess the lessons learned from the end-results stewardship contract demonstration projects authorized by Congress. I believe this authority offers numerous opportunities with potential as an excellent tool to accomplish integrated resource management objectives.

I am also concerned that we have fallen behind in the environmental analysis of many of the range allotments on National Forest lands. Despite a schedule that targeted completed analysis on 4,174 allotments by the end of fiscal year 2001, we currently expect to complete 3,398 in this timeframe. We will focus close attention on the factors that have contributed to this shortfall, and develop actions to improve the situation within the available funding or develop a more realistic schedule.

I believe that agency accountability for the production of forest and range products must take into account the capability of non-industrial private lands to also provide a sustainable flow of products. Forest Service programs strongly support this objective. The fiscal year 2002 President’s budget provides funding for our State and Private Forestry program to continue emphasizing cooperation with State, Tribal and local authorities in enhancing sustainable stewardship of the rural and urban forest. This strong relationship with our partners will be an integral part of our programs in the years to come.

The Forest Service is also accountable for the services it provides to the Nation for recreation. We are, in many ways, America’s backyard. Over 70 percent of the population of the United States lives within an easy day’s drive of National Forests or National Grasslands. We are emphasizing performance accountability in how we meet the recreation demands of America. The attention of Congress to the condition of facilities used by the public has been greatly appreciated. We need to face the fact that a status quo approach to managing facilities will not halt the decline of our infrastructure. We would like to work with you to develop innovative solutions to this problem.

An additional element to support the demand for quality recreation is the Recreation Fee Demonstration program. This program has been a success. The President’s budget proposes a four-year reauthorization of this program.

I believe accountability centers on the ability of the Forest Service to clearly state its performance objectives at specific budget levels and then, based on final appropriations provided by Congress, deliver on the accomplishment of those objectives. I am committed to providing the agency’s line officers with the resources to perform “on-the-ground” work, and systems that allow them to report how well they are per-

forming. To accomplish this we must emphasize performance accountability as strongly as we emphasize financial accountability.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Chairman, Secretary Veneman has clearly stated to me that she wants the Forest Service to be a world-class provider of goods and services for America. I know the agency has that capability. To that end, I intend to personally devote my attention to achieving this goal through emphasis on an organizational reconnection between headquarters and field units, integration of the National Fire Plan with the active management of our natural resources, and continued aggressive adherence to improved performance accountability. Let me again say that I am deeply honored to be the Chief of the Forest Service. I look forward to working with you and thank you for your support. I will be happy to answer any questions.

Senator CRAIG. Dale, thank you very much. We'll do 5-minute rounds and do as many of them as the members would like to have.

Several months ago, right after the inauguration, and President-Elect Bush became President Bush, I was asked to speak to the Capital Chapter of the American Society of Foresters meeting to kind of give an overview, Dale, of what a new administration might bring to the business of the U.S. Forest Service. At the conclusion of my remarks, the answer that stuck out most clearly in my mind was the—or the question that stuck out most clearly in my mind was the first one asked, probably by one of your employees. He said, "Senator, if I, as a Forest Service employee out on the ground, make a decision based on science and based on the law, will I get support from this administration?" Let me ask you the same question. If your employees out on the ground make decisions based on the science and the law, and are within the forest plan, are you going to support them?

Chief BOSWORTH. The answer is an easy answer, and that answer is yes. I have a lot of confidence in our field folks. Our line officers make good decisions. They are capable people, and I do believe we need to support them. Now, obviously, we go through appeals, and sometimes we will find some process errors and what not, and sometimes decisions get overturned because of procedural errors, but we need to be supportive of the decisions that we've trained our folks to make in the field.

Senator CRAIG. Great. You've spoken of, and several of us here have spoken, of the National Fire Plan and its importance, and especially as we look at this coming year. What specifically is the Forest Service doing to promote the cooperation with State and local governments and to communities to ensure readiness for this coming season?

Chief BOSWORTH. We're working very closely with the State foresters. For example, most of the State foresters are very engaged with forest supervisors, and with the regional foresters, in identifying the communities at risk and identifying the areas that would be the highest priority for working around those communities in fields reduction and also for making sure that we have a fire-suppression workforce that will be fully capable of doing the job.

One of the concerns would be that as we build up our fire workforce in the Forest Service, we don't want to steal from the State agencies and leave them short of hands. So we're working closely with them to keep that from happening, because it's really an interagency effort between the Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Park Service, Department of the Interior and the

States. It's the total firefighting workforce we need to look at, not just one or the other.

Senator CRAIG. Is the Forest Service currently training and certifying local individuals to be qualified to assist the Forest Service in firefighting?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, that's happened in a lot of places. One of the things we found out last year was there are people who were capable of fighting fire that hadn't been through the certification. Maybe their equipment hadn't been certified ahead of time—or people hadn't been through some of the recent training and physical-fitness test requirements that you have to have. So while the fires were burning, we were doing some of the training and certifying some of the equipment.

In many places around the country now, this spring, we've been working closely with the communities, and with industries and what not, to get people the training they're going to need and the certifications they need so that they will be ready to go. There's also a lot of interest in the private sector doing that, too.

Senator CRAIG. Tell me about local equipment owners and operators and the ability to utilize that equipment. Where are you at this point with that? There was substantial dissatisfaction last summer with those who felt they were qualified and had their equipment certified but to not be chosen as equipment was hauled in from long distances to fight fires.

Chief BOSWORTH. Last summer, there were criticisms that were going around about going outside the local area to get equipment and bring it in and to fight fire. I, personally—at least in the part of the country where I was last year—got involved in making sure that we were actually—that there weren't people who had equipment sitting around that wasn't being used. However, I'm sure that there were some instances where that was the case. I think, in general, most of the equipment was being used from the local areas.

Another thing I discovered last year is “local” kind of depended on who you were talking to. If you were in one part of the country that didn't have any fires, like for where I was, “local” meant all western Montana because they didn't have any fires on the one forest; but if you went to the forests that had the fires, “local” meant “their town,” not the town 12 miles down the road. One of the difficulties in getting our arms around that was: what are people really referring to when they're talking about local? We can do a better job. We're working on doing a better job, and I think we will be in a better position this year, too.

Senator CRAIG. Well, my time is up. I'll call on my colleagues in the order in which they came to the committee this afternoon. Let me turn to Senator Bingaman.

Senator BINGAMAN. Thank you very much. In the last Congress, I introduced a bill—Senator Domenici co-sponsored it—called the Community Forest Restoration Act, and we passed that into law. The program received \$5 million for the first year of implementation. And I understand that later this month, the Forest Service will issue a request for a proposal—or for proposals for groups interested in obtaining some of these funds. This is for community groups to work on forest restoration projects.

This is a program I think is beneficial to our State if we can keep it going for some period of years, and I wondered if you're familiar with it, if you would support going ahead and funding it, and, in future years, what your view is on it.

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I am familiar with it. I think that local community efforts are the things that'll really make the difference for us, where we can build relationships working with the communities. We will continue the funding at that level again this next year, that is our intention. As I said, I think that building relationships with those communities working together, is really going to be the solution of many of our problems.

Senator BINGAMAN. Well, thank you for that answer. Let me ask also about the Youth Conservation Corps which I mentioned in my opening statement. This is an area where I felt that we not only get a substantial benefit for the forests themselves and the work the Forest Service, but we also do a lot of good with some of the young people that are hired for those summer jobs. Is this something where—do you have any views as to the value of that program and whether we could do a little better with funding of that in the future?

Chief BOSWORTH. My experience with the Youth Conservation Corps has been very positive. In fact, one of my children worked in the Youth Conservation Corps for the Park Service and had a great experience. I think that that's one way that we can educate young people about the outdoors. They can become our allies in the future. They get good work done. They also convince their parents that some of the things that we're doing might be good things. And so, all in all, I think it's a very positive program.

Senator BINGAMAN. Well, thank you very much, and I'll work with you to see if there's a way we can do better by "plussing" up the funding about—I remember a hearing we had in this committee 2 or 3 years ago where I believe I asking the chief of the Forest Service at that time the level of participation in the program. I think he said there were 590 students involved in it nationwide, which was a pretty dramatic cut—reduction from the 30,000 we used to have each summer. So I do think we've got a long way to go to come back there.

I mentioned in my opening statement about this—the proposed cuts for rehabilitation and restoration of lands damaged by fire. That is a big concern in my State, primarily as a result of last year's fires. I would be interested in knowing what your thoughts are as to how we solve that problem. I do think we need to try to get that funding up so we can do that work. These communities are hoping for that and expecting it.

Chief BOSWORTH. The dollars that we got for this fiscal year, for 2001, we prioritized the work that needed to be done. We got the dollars to do the restoration work in those highest-priority areas, and we're moving forward with that. Obviously, it wasn't enough to do the whole program, and we expected that the program would be over a several-year period. Obviously, if you don't get the same amount of money, you don't do the same amount of work. So some of the lower-priority projects would probably not get done with that level of funding. On the other hand, I think there are some opportunities for us to work with other kinds of funds where we can

achieve multiple benefits and still be able to get some of that work done.

Senator BINGAMAN. But you are in agreement that doing this kind of a program for a year or so really doesn't get the job done. This is going to have to be a sustained effort. Do you agree with that basic view?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I guess the way I would put it is that it does take several years to get a total restoration job done when you have a fire season like we had last year. The other part of it is that almost every year we're going to probably have new fires, and so we have to look and see what we need to do after those areas burn, as well.

Senator BINGAMAN. Let me ask, finally, about this recreation. You point out in your statement that recreation is the fastest growing use of the national forests and grasslands. The budget that we've been given requests less money this year than was used last year for the recreation, heritage, and wilderness line items. That is a concern to me. It seems to me that your appreciation for the value of increased—or the extent of the increased recreational activity in the forest is somewhat contradicted by the budget that we have been given here. Could you explain to us where you and the administration are on this issue of making the forest available for recreation?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, as I stated in my opening remarks, I think that we're going to have to look at lots of different ways of being able to provide quality recreation opportunity, through partnerships with non-governmental organizations, through the recreation fee demo, and through the appropriations that we get from Congress. I think working those things together, we can provide for some high-quality recreational experiences.

Senator BINGAMAN. My time is up, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CRAIG. Thank you.

Senator Murkowski.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I'm concerned with a situation that I participated in in Billings, Montana, last year where Senator Burns of this committee held kind of an aftermath of the fire season out there and some of the difficulties and complexities associated with decision making by the incident commander on the scene to make timely decisions. And I'm looking at the record of that hearing here, and, you know, it goes back to the question of whether you, as an independent, I guess, incident commander—you feel you have the equipment necessary—the Cats, chainsaws, so forth and so on—"Do you have the authority to use them?"

And the answer was, "Well, we can't do that in many cases because we have to mitigate these constraints." "Well, a mitigation of constraints can take time while the fire is burning and decisions are pending. When your fire is moving quick, you haven't got a lot of time to worry about how you're going to mitigate."

And the response from the commander was, "In some cases, we may have to renegotiate. Let me use an example of a dozer, vis-à-vis, hand crews."

What I'm getting at, Mr. Bosworth, is the reality that, in this case, in the testimony that was given at this hearing, we had a

case where the question was, would they allow the Caterpillar to go across the “creek,” and the incident commander didn’t know the authority to initiate that action without going back and checking. And then his office had to check with Fish and Wildlife Service. And by that time, why, forget it, it was all gone. And surely, there was a potential reaction from muddying the stream with a cat. There’s a potential reaction from the spring break-up, when high water muddies the creek, and so forth and so on, but, you know, clearly, you had a stalemate on your inability to react on what was good for the forest health.

Now, how are you going to change that mentality so that you hold people accountable—and you mentioned in your statement you were going to hold people accountable for their actions—but still give them the flexibility to make a decision when the forest health is in question?

Chief BOSWORTH. I think the——

The CHAIRMAN. Do we need to change laws for you? Or you tell us what has to happen to make it work.

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I think that, depending upon what issue it is——

The CHAIRMAN. This is the issue. The fire is burning on the other side, and the Cat’s on this side.

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, I just think depending on——

The CHAIRMAN. The creek’s in the middle.

Chief BOSWORTH [continuing]. Depending on the circumstances on that particular. (inaudible) What I wanted to say was long before we have the fires, we have consulted with the Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service to identify the things that an incident commander ought to be aware of, or look out for. In most cases that I’m familiar with, there haven’t been circumstances where we say, “You cannot cross a creek,” or, “You cannot take water out of the creek.” We would say, “Here are the best places to take water out of the creek,” or, “Here are the ways that you can mitigate as you’re fighting the fire.”

I’m sure there’s some circumstances where we have had some of those restrictions that have affected our ability, and I think we need to look at everyone of those and make some corrections in the direction that we give to the incident commanders when they come onto the job.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, I can appreciate your caution, but I would try to get pre-clearance. If you’re responsible for a forest health, that’s—you know, there’s going to have to be a prioritization made in advance whether you cross the creek and cloud the creek or you fight the fire. And this business of—we saw it in New Mexico—and the senators from New Mexico are much more familiar than I—the inability to make a decision early. And I would encourage you, very frankly and up front, to go in with your agencies and make sure that you have the ability to react and not wait, because this committee isn’t going to wait. We’ve already gone through that with the last administration and weren’t satisfied with their response.

The second question I have is—as you may be aware, on May 25 of this last year, the U.S. Court of Claims found illegal the Clinton administration’s reason for its 1994 decision to terminate the 50-year timber contract of Alaska Pulp Corporation. And the Forest

Service did terminate it. Then, on February 14, 2001, the Court of Claims sent the Forest Service another, well, so-called “Valentine” holding, on separate grounds, that the Government had earlier acted illegally. The Government acted illegally by un-unilaterally modifying the contract. And in a December 1999 memorandum that the committee has previously reviewed, the Forest Service warned that findings of liability such as those reached by the court could result in damages to the Government in excess of \$1 billion, more in the tune of \$1.2 billion for cancelling that contract.

Now, let’s assume for a moment that this warning proves accurate; and let’s assume that the Forest Service is asked to reimburse the Federal judgment find for a billion-dollar judgment. How do you propose addressing this eventuality?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, obviously, if we were to have to reimburse the judgment find of over a billion dollars, our agency would be in very, very difficult circumstance. You know, what we would have to do is work with the administration and work with the Congress to figure out how we’d do that, because it would be a major, major problem for the Forest Service.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, when you breach a contract, sometimes those are the aftermath. And it is unfortunate that the people responsible for this can’t be held accountable, but some of them are up teaching in colleges in various other places where they are protected by academic structure.

Thank you.

Senator CRAIG. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Let me turn to Senator Wyden.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we have talked about in this subcommittee on many occasions, Mr. Bosworth, and I think I’ve told you, I want to see, as much as anything in the natural resources area, decisions get out of the beltway, get out of Washington D.C., and get to the local level. I’m absolutely convinced that there are creative ways to do that and still comply with the national environmental laws. I don’t think this is mutually exclusive. To send something back to the States and local communities and say, “Well, just go do your thing” is not acceptable. I do think, though, that they ought to be given more freedom to meet national environmental standards.

Now, recently Senator Craig offered an idea that I thought was very interesting, and I want explore it with you. He mentioned interest in examining, on a forest-by-forest basis, wilderness proposals. And it seems to me what is interesting about that idea is you could have plenty of opportunity for folks to comment at the local level, and at the same time look at it in the context of national requirements. What do you think of that idea?

Chief BOSWORTH. I would have to do some thinking about it specifically, but I guess my reaction is that, through our forest-planning process, we’ve identified areas that are suitable for wilderness. We did most of our forest plans 10 to 15 years ago, and those were laid out and worked with the public when we came out with those forest plan recommendations, or those final forest plans. I think looking at, I always believe that looking on a forest-by-forest basis gives good opportunities for local input and still gives the op-

portunity to look at the bigger picture, as well. So I think that there is some merit to that.

Senator WYDEN. Well, I thank you for that answer. I think my colleague, the chairman of the subcommittee, has a good idea. It's one of those ideas that he and I have talked about time and time again, that helps you forge a "third path" kind of approach, and I'm going to want to explore it with you.

The other area I'd be interested in is getting an update on the county payments legislation. That money is supposed to get out to these resource-dependent communities this fall. And as you know, there is just a world of hurt in those communities.

Let me also say that you and your staff have been very responsive in working with the chairman and I, in my view, in terms of trying to get us information to the extent you can given the fact that you're just getting started. So I think it would be helpful if you could say where you are for the record, in terms of complying with that law.

Chief BOSWORTH. Okay. I'm going to ask Randy to give a little bit of additional information. But before I do that, I would like to say that I think that the County Payments Act is going to give the Forest Service a really great opportunity to develop some relationships differently with counties, and I think that with the new relationship, we're going to be able to go beyond just the county payments to learn how to work together better. I think the law will help facilitate that. Now I'm going to have Randy just give you a little more of an update specifically on where we are.

Mr. PHILLIPS. As you know, Senator, the County Payments really is looking at an old model that we used to use many years ago in Federal Government with the advisory committees. I think we're well on our way to implementing that law. In your State, all the resource advisory committee—the geographic distribution of those resource advisory councils have been approved. They're in the process of recruiting membership for them. The State of Washington is the same way. In the State of California, the resource advisory councils have been formed. The State of Idaho, fully formed and approved. Arizona and New Mexico have each come in with two resource advisory councils. We're expecting the State of Montana to complete their work soon. The southern region of the Forest Service has, I think, 13 resource advisory councils. So I'm real pleased to see the progress and the level of interest and excitement out there.

The next step is the charter for each of those advisory councils. We expect to receive those within the next week or two along with membership for the secretary to approve those councils. I think everybody is responding very well to this.

Senator WYDEN. Let me ask one other question, if I might, Mr. Chairman. How is the announcement, Chief, with respect to additional public comment on the roadless issue affecting your implement of the roadless proposal now? Chairman Craig has heard me say this on many occasions. You know, I favor the multiple-use proposal very strongly. I've always thought that we could have, with sensible planning that was locally driven, the protection of additional roadless areas. And so we've tried on this committee, with fire and county payments, to figure out a way to do it in a biparti-

san basis. What is your sense about how this comment effort, soliciting more comment, is going to affect the implementation of the roadless proposal as it stands now?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, on May 12, the roadless rule would go into effect. It's our intention to come out with a proposal in June to amend that roadless rule to help correct some of the concerns that both the court has pointed out, as well as many of the local State agencies and officials have pointed out. Through that amendment, then we'll be trying to correct some of those problems.

I envision that is where we would end up, then, is having an opportunity for people with local knowledge and information to be able to correct some of the maps, some of the information that was in there, make some adjustments through a forest planning process to those roadless areas. I'd really have to wait and see what kind of comments we get back on our amended—on our proposal to amend the rule and see what kind of adjustments we'd make in that.

Senator WYDEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CRAIG. We've been joined by Senator Domenici. Do you have any opening comment?

Senator DOMENICI. That's fine, Senator.

Senator CRAIG. Fine enough. Then let me turn to Senator Craig Thomas.

Senator THOMAS. Chief, I notice land and water conservation funding in your budget is about \$130 million. How do you intend to use that? Is that acquisition? Or what is the purpose of the land and water conservation fund?

Chief BOSWORTH. It would be pretty much acquisition of lands that are important lands. And those—each one of those gets approved by Congress on a case-by-case basis.

Senator THOMAS. What do you think of the notion that States, for instance, that have 25 percent or more public land—Federal Government land, maybe they're ought not be any net increase, that if you want to make the change, there ought to be some effort to make a trade?

Chief BOSWORTH. Often, we would like to do land exchanges, and that is something that we do, and I think we do fairly well and often. I think there's also times when acquisition is the best way to accomplish the objectives, particularly when it's small parcels of land—relatively small parcels of land. But there's occasions where it makes sense to do some larger ones. You know I always prefer not to have a one-size-fits-all rule, because there sometimes are reasons why you might want to make some adjustments to that. I think that the idea of using land exchanges to achieve those objectives when we can, makes a lot of sense. I think we do a lot of good with some of the acquisitions that we do, though, and some of the really important—

Senator THOMAS. I'm sure you do, but some States have 85 percent Federal land. Is there no limit to what—do you want to just take over the whole State?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, that is not my objective, to take over the whole State. I doubt if, in most of those cases, that we would be looking at large parcels of land acquisition.

Senator THOMAS. Well, I just think it is an issue that we ought to talk about, and we ought to have a policy. What about those areas that have been nominated for wilderness and have been sitting there for 15 years?

Chief BOSWORTH. Are you asking me whether or not I think that we ought—they ought to be—is that in relationship to the land acquisition or the——

Senator THOMAS. No, I'm talking—they were nominated but they were never made wilderness, but you manage them as wilderness as if they are and seem to be happy to continue to do that.

Chief BOSWORTH. Through our forest plans we identified those areas that were suitable for wilderness, and in most of the forest plans were we identified those lands suitable for wilderness, we have management direction that would not allow precluding the wilderness values. As we revise our forest plans, we will be looking at those areas again and deciding whether or not we still think those are areas that should be——

Senator THOMAS. But even if you do, to-be wilderness they're supposed to be created by the Congress, isn't that true?

Chief BOSWORTH. The Congress is the only body that can establish wilderness.

Senator THOMAS. That isn't the way it works. I can tell you some that have been there for years that are still managed as wilderness but have never been treated by the Congress.

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, again, I think that in most cases, what we've said is we want to give Congress the opportunity. We didn't want to preclude that option, and on certain areas where there is a high support for wilderness, for adding to the wilderness system. On the other hand, there are some areas that a lot of people would like to see wilderness that we have had management prescriptions through our forest plans to do other kinds of things.

Senator THOMAS. Well, again, I'm talking about a rule or a direction or something. Do you think they just ought to go on forever as being nominated; or should—after 10 years, they either are adopted by Congress or else they are not any longer nominated?

Chief BOSWORTH. No, I think they need to be looked at every time we go through a forest plan revision.

Senator THOMAS. That's not the point. That's you making the decision every time you do it. You don't come to the Congress.

Chief BOSWORTH. I guess I would argue that when we're going through a forest plan revision, that's a fairly intensive public-involvement process where we are getting——

Senator THOMAS. Well, we just said that Congress is the only one that has the authority to do it, but you are doing it without the authority simply by nominating them and leaving them there.

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes. However, I don't think that we're managing them, in most cases, in exactly the same way. I would agree that we're not building roads in them; we're not doing any logging, and in wilderness area, we don't use a chainsaw to clear trails. In some of these areas that have not become wilderness, we have used chainsaws to clear trails.

Senator THOMAS. So you think the Forest Service ought to decide what is wilderness and what isn't?

Chief BOSWORTH. No, I think that we ought to through our forest-planning process, working with the public, we ought to decide what the management prescriptions ought to be for areas, and then leave it to Congress to decide if they want an area to become wilderness.

Senator THOMAS. And do you think maybe you ought to bring them to Congress if you have some that ought to be that way?

Chief BOSWORTH. I think that that's one choice. One option is for the administration——

Senator THOMAS. What's the other option?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, the other option is for us to, again, through our forest plan, to——

Senator THOMAS. See, I don't agree with that. I don't think that is what the law requires. It's not up to you to decide what's wilderness for evermore, is it?

Chief BOSWORTH. No, that's Congress's choice.

Senator THOMAS. Well, then why don't you do it that way?

Chief BOSWORTH. The way I see it is that that's what we are doing.

Senator THOMAS. No, you're not. You're not bringing it to the Congress to be decided.

Chief BOSWORTH. What we're doing is——

Senator THOMAS. The wilderness in Wyoming was an act of Congress.

Chief BOSWORTH. That's right.

Senator THOMAS. Now there's lots of it that's been there just as long as that has never been acted on by Congress.

Chief BOSWORTH. There are areas in the national forest that are not wilderness, the Congress has not established as wilderness——

Senator THOMAS. They're managed like wilderness, I can tell you that, in the ones that I'm familiar with up around Kemmerer, Wyoming, and the Tetons.

Chief BOSWORTH. There are places in the national forest system where we are not building roads into them, where we're not doing logging, but——

Senator THOMAS. I can see we're not going to get a response that—I mean, I understand. You're saying if you want to do that, you will do it whether the Congress approves it or not.

Chief BOSWORTH. I obviously see it different than you. Only Congress has the ability to designate wilderness and——

Senator THOMAS. What's the difference if you manage it as wilderness whether it's designated or whether it isn't?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, it depends on how long?

Senator THOMAS. Well, 15, 20 years?

Chief BOSWORTH. Fifteen years, yes. And then you examine it again through the forest plan.

Senator THOMAS. Okay. I don't agree with you, Chief, and we're going to try and do something about it. I'm for wilderness if it's nominated and we agree to it, fine; but I don't think it's right to have the forest—or someone nominate it and you manage it that way without coming to make the final decision where the decision is supposed to be made.

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, I would be happy to have some discussions to try to understand the difference between what I think I'm saying and what I think that you're talking about.

Senator THOMAS. I think it's pretty clear, and I will help you understand it, if you want me to.

Chief BOSWORTH. All right.

Senator THOMAS. Thank you.

Senator CRAIG. Senator Kyl.

Senator KYL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, Chief, welcome. Just about four quick things I would like to bring to your attention. Then any comments you'd make is fine.

The folks I've dealt with for the Forest Service out in Arizona have been cooperative and responsive to me, and I want you to know that; but I do get comments from time to time from folks that think things could be a little better.

One rancher friend of mine, for example, who has good relationship with the Forest Service, a big allotment there, finds, from time to time, they're not talking to him before they do things. He went out on the range one day, and a bunch of guys were building fencing off his riparian there.

He goes down, says, "What are you guys doing?"

"We're fencing off your riparian area."

"Well, I've got cows that need to drink there."

"Well, we have a contract with the Forest Service to do this."

Nobody had talked to him in advance. That kind of thing, obviously, you don't win friends and influence people by doing. So the first point I would make is get the word out to folks, talk to the ranchers, talk to the folks that are on the land before you do anything. You can usually work out things in advance. And good relationships with these stewards, the ranchers who are on the range land are important for the Forest Service to be successful. Those are probably the exceptions to the rule, but it's a point I wanted to make, since those stories have been brought to my attention.

On the matter that Senator Craig brought up, we are finding many States between 12 and 14 percent private, and it's going down fast. One of the ways it happens is perfectly innocent. You get inholdings in the forest, they would like to consolidate the holdings. Maybe some developer goes out there, and he puts together 500 acres worth of inholdings. Let's say it's just worth a million dollars. And you've got five acres right on the edge of town he would like to develop. It's a good opportunity for a swap, for an exchange, all above board, everything's fine, but it does mean that you've got 500—or, excuse me, 495 new Federal acres, versus five new private acres. And that kind of thing goes on and on and on and on. And pretty soon, even though the value is the same, you're down to a lot less quantity of private land. It's not for you to deal with, except in the land and water conservation context, and we do need to have some kind of a no-net loss of private lands.

On the forest management—it's the main thing that I wanted to bring to your attention—the GAO had a study in 1999 that you're probably familiar with that said we've got 20 to 25 years to clean up our forests or they're all going to burn down or die from disease. And at that time, there were about 39 million acres that needed to be treated. Well, seven million have burned, so we're down to

thirty two, but we need to get that treated in large-area treatment programs. The urban interfaces are fine. The experimental programs are fine, but obviously we're now at a point where we have got to treat large areas. Part of the problem is, we've lost a lot of the commercial logging, so the people are not there to do it, because it does take equipment, in many cases, to go in and do the thinning before you do the prescribed burning and so on.

We've got some great programs out in Arizona. I'd like to invite you out, and I'll contact you about it. Maybe you've seen the work of Dr. Wally Covington at Northern Arizona University. He's got some great plots that show, over the years, what this management has done to help the forest. And so I would like to invite you out there.

We need to get more money in the budget, and we need to get more actual work on the ground to treat these large areas. And any ideas that you have in that regard I would like to hear about, because if we need to do it through the appropriation process or some other kind of authorization, although I think you've got full authorization to do it, I would like to try to help, because that is probably my number-one concern, in terms of our forests out in Arizona. And as you know, we have the largest Ponderosa Pine forest in the world out there, and it needs help. Any comments would be appreciated.

Chief BOSWORTH. I think some of the Coconino National Forest country is a great example of where we can do work and make the forest healthier and make it more resilient to fire. To get it closer to what it looked like, 50, 75, 100 years ago and also help really help the communities and provide jobs. So there's a real win-win in those things.

Obviously, one of the solutions is to appropriate dollars, but I think that the stewardship contracting is another opportunity to help be able to get more work done using the concepts of bundling projects, end-results contracting and using the value of the material to be able to get more work done. So I think there are some of those kinds of things that we can experiment with, and I would very much like an opportunity to visit some of that area.

Senator KYL. We have three main—I'd love to invite you out there and will be in contact—three main problems. First of all, our logging industry—commercial logging industry is essentially gone, so there aren't the people there to do it. Secondly, there isn't a great market for the small-diameter product, as you well know. And third, you've got environmental groups, radical groups—most of the environmental groups are fully supportive of this, but you've got some radical groups that use the Endangered Species Act and other laws to try to stop the Forest Service from these projects and, therefore, it takes a lot of time. And we need, frankly, people in the Forest Service who are willing to go ahead even in the face of threatened litigation.

I'm glad to see that, through some of the work we've done out there, you've got folks that are ready to do that. They've taken the action. They may have taken a temporary hit with the litigation. But it turns out, because they're right, that it is merely a delay, and then they move on with the project. We need to do that.

Chief BOSWORTH. I also think our research branch of the Forest Service is doing some good research trying to make sure we understand what the effects of this kind of activity would be. It gives us a stronger support in litigation if we know if we have better science to back up our actions, and continuing with that research is really important to us.

Senator KYL. Well, if I can just make this point, the research has proven the technique. We've got to treat large areas now. I mean, I—frankly, I think we're continuing some research, but that's not where the emphasis needs to be now. The emphasis now needs to be on large-area treatment.

Chief BOSWORTH. When I was referring to the research, I was thinking particularly of the effects that some of these field treatments have on soil, water, and other species. I think getting better information on some of that would also help us in—

Senator KYL. Since the chairman isn't paying attention, I'm going to go ahead, even though the light's off. Oh, he caught me. But just—Covington will show you, for example, even after a couple of years, the grasses come back, the protein content of the grasses is, like, quadrupled, you've got all kinds of critters coming in to eat the grass that weren't there before, and all the other things that that brings with it. The pitch content of the trees is, like, an order of magnitude greater, and therefore it's resistant to bark beetle and other things that afflict it. Obviously, you've got less competition for the nutrients and the water and the soil, and the trees are just healthier and it looks better, as you say.

All of the effects are positive, and none of the effects are negative. When you compare to the dog-hair thicket control plot next door, it just looks awful, and it is awful. So the research shows it works. We just need to treat large areas. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CRAIG. I have mentioned to Senator Kyl that we may try to get the subcommittee out in field hearings, or at least a field tour, to look at the Covington work and others, and you might think about that, Chief. We might be able to spend a couple of additional days to look elsewhere where these kinds of activities are going on. We've clearly got to draw the public's attention to these kinds of efforts—and that, in fact, they are forest and environmentally enhancing and not destructive—if we're going to get anywhere. I think our PR efforts are almost as important as our policy efforts. With that, let me turn to Senator Pete Domenici.

Senator DOMENICI. Thank you very much, Senator Craig. Might I just say it's 20 minutes of 4 o'clock on a Tuesday afternoon, and I want to compliment you. Having a hearing, having attendance, and having a number of Senators coming to participate would indicate to me that there is a genuine interest on your part, as subcommittee chairman, to see that we properly oversee what is going on and do our share to be participants in what the new administration does with reference to these—this valuable commodity we call our forests.

Let me say, Mr. Bosworth—I don't know you very well, but I compliment you on the job you've got, and I know that it's a tough one. I hope very much that in 6 months or a year, after you've gone

through a few more wars, that we will have you back here and you'll look as well as you do now.

[Laughter.]

Chief BOSWORTH. I hope so, too.

Senator DOMENICI. There's a lot of things going to happen during your tenure that are very difficult, very contentious, and some will not want to hear facts, and others will want the facts their way. But you have a very difficult, yet real, job to provide Congress with factual information about what is going on out there. We can't go out and visit all of our forest lands, but I can tell you, you don't have to be much of a forest buff, nor a Senator who is generally knowledgeable about details, to know that a lot of America's forests, some that you manage and some that the BLM manages, are in desperate need of management and in desperate need of thinning, in desperate need of letting some sunlight in so that we have real trees instead of what we've got—the trees that don't even get a chance to grow because they're so thick, one upon another, it doesn't even look like the forest used to when we were growing up. And, you know, those are all part of somebody saying to Congress, "We have to—you have to help us." Perhaps it is more projects that are truly in the thinning—in the management area than we've ever had before because we're getting close to a difficult time for the forests of America.

Now, having said that, I wonder if I might start—knowing that I don't want to burden you and your staff with digging up a lot of information—but I think it would be interesting if you could list for us—if the chairman agrees, submit to the committee a list of all of the lawsuits the Forest Service is involved in, with a one-line summary of them, as it pertains to contentions that you are not doing your job the way you should, or something you plan or propose is contested in the courts. I think it would be good for us to know a little bit about that. Can you get that done in a reasonable period of time?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, we have summaries of all that already, and we can just put it together and submit it to you.*

Senator DOMENICI. Now, I have some very specific questions, but I want to ask you generally about roadless areas. I'm going to give you an example, and then I'm just going to ask you, where are the options going to come from? We have many areas in New Mexico that are called "urban interface." They have been designated already by the Federal Government pursuant to the law we passed that we called "Happy Forests," which we put \$240 million in on the floor of the Senate—\$120 for you and \$120 for BLM. I was pleased to have drafted that amendment. Nobody, in the end, contested it, including the administration, so we got the money. There's some language in there that said you're going to inventory these critical interface areas and that you're going to be in a position to notify the areas of their situation. I think that's well along, so that you could go to New Mexico and other States, and they could tell you where one of these critical urban-interface areas.

I want to talk about just a couple, generally, and ask you what's going to happen when you look at roadless areas. What happens if,

*The summaries have been retained in subcommittee files.

in one of these areas, like the Santa Fe—the city of Santa Fe and their water supply, where the forest is right down—coming right down to their water supply, which are two lakes that ebb and tide, depending upon rain, but clearly that everybody knows, if we had a major forest fire, you probably would destroy the water of the city of Santa Fe. So people are now anxious—you all are, and others—to try to get this forest contained and thinned so we won't have a forest fire that will dump all of the ash into these two lakes and, you know, 65-70,000 population have their principal water harmed—water supply.

Well, if you drive along the forest, there's only one road. It's been there a long time. And you look up on your right-hand side, and the hill is a little bit low, but then it's very precipitous for maybe 200 yards, and it's full of growth. What I understand, unless you make for flexibility, there cannot even be a temporary road built to thin that forest beyond the one we already have. Now, I don't know whether it's right or not to build a temporary road to thin that, but I have been told what it will take to leave it as it is and do the work of thinning. It is a very tough job. You can't move the kind of equipment in. But some say, "Don't worry about it. You can use helicopters to clean it." Well, that's an option, and I don't say that jokingly. Somebody has said that. Maybe you can find something that is not mechanized to move in there to clean it.

But I wonder—using that as an example, and there must be hundreds like that, Mr. Chairman—when you take another look at the local input to roadless areas, will you look at what might be needed to thin, so we don't have fires; or, if we have a fire, to go ahead and build some temporary structures to avoid the total engulfing of an entire forest by stopping it with infringements upon the roadless area? Could you give me your thoughts about that, Chief? I would be very interested.

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I would love to. The first thing is that under the roadless rule, if it is for protection of or for health and safety and what not—there's certain things that can be done under the current rule. At the same time, our intention would be to propose an amendment to the current rule that would allow local knowledge and local information to be considered and then, through the forest planning process, make some adjustments. I don't know the specific area of the Santa Fe National Forest that you're talking about, but it seems to me like those are the kinds of circumstances that we need to be looking real hard at as we revise the forest plans to see whether or not those are some opportunities to make some adjustments and to meet the needs of the local area. I mean, you're talking about a municipal watershed. It would be our intention or objective to manage the watershed so the people of Santa Fe would have clean water. We don't want to do things that are going to keep us from being able to do that. That's why I think it's important to have local knowledge and local input.

Senator DOMENICI. I have talked with the chairman, because he has been in close contact with the administration regarding this area—this situation—and Senator Craig, I thank you for the many suggestions you're making—but I believe that modifications that—so as to avoid fires or so as to thin, where thinning is needed and already been determined to be necessary, ought to be an area that

some kind of an option—I mean, I’m not saying build roads that are permanent in nature, but what if you just can’t clean it up from the existing road without enormous expense? And I hope we’ll be looking at that together, and, Senator, I assume that will be one of the things you’re concerned about as you—

Senator CRAIG. Yes.

Senator DOMENICI. Now, let me say—in the thinning process, sometimes you have to cut tress, right?—not giant trees, but I think somebody has established—maybe seven, eight, nine inch trees have to be—that large, can be cut to thin an area. I would like to ask you if you would take a look at the forest in New Mexico where there is currently a plan, and the thinning would provide no trees for local use. They will all be burned as the end product of the thinning. Which forest is that? (Inaudible.) Santa Fe is one of them, and there may be others. Could I ask you if you would take a look and see why, since we have been so tedious in putting in in language that says, “Contract with local areas. Get this kind of salvage into the hands of people that can use it”—you know, in our State, they used it for decades and decades. And now, the Hispanic population in those areas can get in, and now we’re going to clean it up, and we’re going to have a plan that says we’re going to burn it all. I wonder if you could review that for us. And my own view on it is—you know, there ought to be more than one option, in terms of what the final destination of the trees that are thinned is. Is it an ash heap, or is it somewhere else where it could be utilized? Could you, first, give me your thoughts on that, and then would you look into it for us?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I will look into it. My thoughts on that are—I would like to go back to when you were first talking about the size of the trees and a diameter limit. I really hope that we avoid specific diameter limits that cover all the countryside, because I think that it ought to be based upon a case-by-case basis. What is small diameter on one national forest may be pretty big for another national forest, and it really depends upon the circumstances.

I believe that whenever we have the opportunity, we ought to utilize the material that we are removing, if it’s possible to utilize it. Now, there are circumstances where it probably costs more to utilize the material than it would be to burn it where it is, depending on how far it is to a facility that can make use of it. Burning may be actually cheaper than removal in some cases, but we ought to have the options, we ought to look at the choices, and we ought to do what is best for the land and for the community. Again, it needs to look at the overall situation in that particular area.

Senator DOMENICI. Let me say, in paragraphs three and four of the Wildfire Management in part of the FY-01 Appropriations—that’s called the Appropriations Act, title IV. We asked the Secretary of Agriculture to explain any differences between a cohesive fire strategy and proposed rulemaking such as roadless policy. Are you doing that? Will it be done? Did you understand my question?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I think I understand your question. Is there a difference between the cohesive strategy for fire and rulemaking, such as the roadless rule. I would assume that you’re talking about—

Senator DOMENICI. Well, we can just all look—you all can look at the statute and just read the language. We asked the secretary, which means you, to explain any differences.

Chief BOSWORTH. I'm told we are doing that right now.

Senator DOMENICI. Are you? Very fine. And more or less when might that be ready? You could ask your people. That's a tough assignment.

Chief BOSWORTH. We should have a complete answer in the next 2 or 3 weeks, so we can get back to you on that.

[The information follows:]

The required analysis was conducted and published in the Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

The framework for the fuel management section of the Roadless FEIS was structured using the same fuel management classification system as the Cohesive Strategy. Forest Service priorities as articulated in the Cohesive Strategy and implemented in the National Fire Plan will focus fuel treatment in the millions of acres at risk where access is not an issue. However, restrictions on road construction and reconstruction in inventoried roadless and contiguous unroaded areas could hinder fuel reduction treatments in those areas that are at moderate to high risk from uncharacteristic wildfire effects.

Senator DOMENICI. My last question has to do with a very parochial one. Much of New Mexico's traditional communities, which I've explained a little differently before—they have, in the past, become very forest dependent. Now, previous policies that the Forest Service had deprived these lands and the people of activities that could help the people there and, at the same time, produce some local jobs. The '01 Interior Appropriation Act specifically asks that you utilize local resources. That's part of this appropriation bill. Now, there are a lot of people in my State that are very eager to participate in hazardous-fuel reduction. They contact my office—and perhaps Senator Bingaman's—to get information on where this is going, where are we going to end up, with reference to their participation.

First of all, I want you to know that some of these local people can't get information from the Forest Service as to where are we with reference to promoting local jobs. If there are none, maybe that's an answer, but I think they deserve, certainly, to know where things are.

So these opportunities that I've spoken of were made—we lifted it very high—the expectation was pretty high when we passed the bill on the floor and when we talked last year with your predecessors. So what can we do to get the word out, and where should the people that are asking about this be referred?

Chief BOSWORTH. I think there's a number of things that we could do to get the word out. Usually the way to do that is just through the local networks and having good communications with county commissioners and with community leaders. There are other more technologically advanced ways of doing that, too, but a lot of folks that want the jobs sometimes don't have access to that. So I think there are some things that we can do that are probably taking place in some communities but maybe not others, and we can look into that.

I think that we are doing a pretty fair job of moving forward, in terms of trying to get the projects going and using the local employment. One thing I would want to say, though, is that in this first

year we are pretty much dependent on already-existing projects in order to meet our accomplishments, the projects that we already had in the pipeline. And as we move forward with the implementation of the National Fire Plan, I think it's going to give us more opportunities to focus that around the communities and make more contacts with people, and I think we will be able to implement that even better as time goes on.

Senator DOMENICI. Mr. Chairman, I want to say that the local managers, those who have been charged with the various forests in New Mexico—for the most part, I think the Government has done a great job of putting the right people in those places in New Mexico, but I think it is important that sooner or later, as soon as you get caught up, that the people in a State like mine where there is much different relationship between the forest and the people around it than perhaps any area you've worked at heretofore, that you come out and visit with these people, as a representative of the Government, to assure them—you know, first let them see who you are and talk with you and then to give them the assurance that this administration wants given to them regarding a better relationship between them and the forests of our country. Could I kind of generally ask if you would be interested in that at some point?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I would. One of the things I really want to do is get out to as many places as I can around the country on the national forests and the grasslands and visit with people. Parts of the country where I'm most familiar with are probably in places I won't go to, places that I've spent most of my career in, in the inner-mountain region, northern region. I need to get to places like the Southwest and Southern States and some of the Eastern States. I'm looking forward to doing that.

Senator DOMENICI. Now, we gave you a hundred and twenty as a special appropriation in that amendment that passed, and then there has been an ongoing budget for 2001, and now we're talking about an ongoing budget for 2002. Is that hundred and twenty being appropriately integrated where we are going to—not going to do less with the rest of the money—or ask for less because you've got the one twenty? That wasn't intended, you know, to permit us to cut. It was permitted to be in addition to, because we had some serious problems. What can you tell us about that?

Chief BOSWORTH. I think the main point is that our regular program is going to continue on, and it's my expectation that it not affect the regular program. I still think that we need to integrate these programs to give multiple benefit as much as we possibly can, but we shouldn't be picking this up at the expense of other things.

Senator DOMENICI. Okay, thank you. I think that's what we intended, and I hope you carry that out. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CRAIG. Pete, let me thank you for your leadership in this area. Obviously, with what happened at Los Alamos last year, all of our attention was drawn to that. Of course, following that were catastrophic fires throughout the inner mountain west that dramatized even more the kind of legislation we were talking about. And I will say, at the time that we worked with you on the Happy Forest bill, you know, there was a desire to try to put a diameter limitation in there as to the types of trees that could be removed, and

we were able to avoid that. I hope we can prove to the public at large that stewardship programs in forest health is not the new cover up for green sale. That is not the intent at all. And I know that that was the concern of some, that, therefore, we need a diameter limitation.

Chief, I'm very pleased to hear you speak out to the need to have the flexibility to make the decisions on the ground as to what needs to be removed and that you're not bound by legislation to specific trees. We're not in the business, nor should we ever get in the business, of legislatively micro-managing the U.S. Forest Service, but there has been an attempt to do that at times, and I think that was your concern, Senator.

Let me recognize Bill Eby, who is in the audience. Bill is sitting out there. Chief, you need an expert on county payments, he's the guy that helped us write it. He was a Forest Service fellow with this committee for the last year when we were working that bill energetically, and so he probably knows more about it than most of us. But I wanted to—I saw Bill in the audience and wanted to recognize him.

Also, we have the Western States Legislative Forestry Task Force with us today, State legislators from Western States. I'm glad you're here. You're here at a very timely situation listening to the budget and the new chief. And as you know, that ultimately translates to, hopefully, activity on the ground in our Western States.

Chief, Congress has worked hard to ensure that communities can work with the Forest Service in a collaborative fashion. Both Senator Wyden and I referred to that in our opening comments. How are you going to ensure that the Economic Action Program continues to serve as a link between the Forest Service and communities, especially to ensure that communities and local businesses can benefit from the reduction of hazardous fuels on public lands in the West—i.e., Senator Domenici's reference to the fact that the proposal, in that instance, on those forests was to burn it all, if you will?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, I think that there is a close relationship between the work that we need to get done on the ground and community health, community resilience and resistance, both from an ecological and economic standpoint. I think it's very clear that the direction we're giving to the regions and the forests is to focus on community action and work with communities in identifying the places, both on national forests, as well as the places between the national forests and private land, where the work can be done. Through our State private forestry programs, we have opportunities to provide funding to help communities do some of the planning, and to help communities get some of the work done on private land. I think all of these different programs work together to accomplish that.

Again, I think that the Payments-to-States legislation is a great facilitator in helping us work together to identify those kinds of projects, as well.

Senator CRAIG. Monitoring for social and ecological effectiveness, as opposed to monitoring for implementation accountability of the National Fire Plan, is important to Congress. Where in the 2002

budget are the dollars to pay for that monitoring, and who will be responsible for it? And, of course, can we get a copy of your plan for effective monitoring?

Chief BOSWORTH. It's my understanding it's in the fuels management dollars to do the monitoring. And what was the last part of your question?

Senator CRAIG. Well, I'd like to see the plan as it relates to it and where, in your 2000 budget—you say the money is in the fuels area.

Chief BOSWORTH. It would be the fuels management—

Senator CRAIG. Can we get a copy of your plan for that monitoring?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes.

Senator CRAIG. Okay.

[The information follows:]

Each Forest Land Management Plan identifies monitoring of social, ecological and environmental changes as a part of activities occurring on the forest. Project plans for fuel treatment, forest health (pest management), or other projects all have monitoring as a part of the plan. The Forest Service does not establish a separate account specifically identified for monitoring but rather includes monitoring as one of the activities occurring in each of the programs such as the National Fire Plan implementation.

Chief BOSWORTH. I'd just like to say, too, that I think that an important aspect of what we're doing is to monitor public understanding and public acceptance. We have done a lot of monitoring on on-the-ground kinds of things, as in natural resource kind of monitoring, but the success of the fire plan is going to depend largely on how people feel and their attitude toward it. I think that's a real important aspect of the monitoring that we need to do.

Senator CRAIG. Well, I think the Congress feels that way, too. Obviously, we've caught the public's attention. They're very curious about the need and what we've expressed as forest health and the consequence of bad health. And I think that, as we've phrased it, social and ecological effectiveness as a part of that monitoring is going to be critical in convincing the public that we're headed in the right direction.

All of the increases in the economic action plan appear to be related to the needs of the National Fire Plan, yet no specific item shows as a follow-up to the initial emergency \$12.5 million investment in planning, utilization, and marketing. How can we be assured that follow-up will happen?

Chief BOSWORTH. Yes, I guess I'm going to have to get back to you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator CRAIG. Fair enough.

[The information follows:]

In FY 2001, support through the National Fire Plan will establish two components: 1) Technology Implementation and State Capability Enhancement—ten multi-region projects, will strengthen the market. Also State utilization and marketing capabilities will be strengthened in 17 western states, to provide professional assistance to 1,400 additional community level projects. 2) Financial Assistance—grants to support 150-200 local projects will emphasize market development and expansion, and increasing the market value of by-products of hazardous fuel reduction treatments.

Activities in FY 2001 will demonstrate the ability to create, add value, and diversify the economic options of rural communities using small diameter material. It takes 6 to 18 months for projects that have an economic impact to become operational. Projects are currently being selected in all Forest Service regions and the

Northeast area; program managers, with communities and local businesses, will examine the long-term potential of biomass and value-added projects from hazardous fuel reduction and ecosystem restoration projects.

Chief BOSWORTH. I don't have the answer to that.

Senator CRAIG. Well, I think that is an important part of it as it relates, again, to the effective investment and how it gets utilized.

Even before you were appointed to serve as the chief, there was a growing expectation of the things that you might accomplish. There's also an expectation that you should have accomplished all of these things yesterday. While change does not occur overnight, can you explain what particular priorities you hope emphasize in both the short term and the long term? Why don't you take me through the first year and then the first couple of years?

Chief BOSWORTH. I will start with the short term. They are some of the things I talked about in my opening remarks, but a lot of those are internal things that would make our organization more effective, get the dollars to the ground, and get the connection reestablished between the national headquarters and the field.

In the longer term, I think that the whole financial management and financial health would be an important part of the longer term. I think we need to really look at the processes we're using that take so much time to get work done. It's very frustrating to our folks in the field, and it's frustrating to a lot of us, that we spend so much time and so much energy just working our way through the process of NEPA, the process of trying to make our projects able to sustain challenges in court.

I believe that we probably do most of the work with the first 20 percent of the dollars we get; and the other 80 percent is spent trying to keep ourselves capable of withstanding court challenges. I think that there are some things that we can do to streamline the NEPA process, to work better with the regulatory agencies so we can work our way more quickly through the Endangered Species Act consultation process. I'm really interested in trying to find some ways of being able to do those things, to find some solutions to the process gridlock that I think we're in.

Senator CRAIG. Thank you. I think one of the concerns that many of us westerners have is that we are in a low-water year in the Great Basin West, and there are lots of fuels out there to burn. We, again, have the ingredients for what most of us are very fearful could be another catastrophic fire season. Due to the fact that the fire money only recently arrived in the forests, there have been very little—there's been very little time for projects to be implemented. And as Senator Bingaman noted, many projects selected were on the shelf, in essence. What, if any, can be done to expedite the process of reducing these fuels?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, I think, again, trying to figure out ways of resolving the process gridlock that we're in so that we are able to move more quickly. I also think that we have some opportunities within our current processes, where we bundle our projects together and do our consultation all at one time. We're working in some regions right now to develop checklists so that the consultation process will go a lot faster, so that we know that if we do certain kinds of projects, we won't have difficulty in terms of consulta-

tion with certain threatened or endangered species. So there's some of those kinds of things that I think that we can do.

Senator CRAIG. What should our communities expect from the Forest Service as the 2001 fire season approaches?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, we are continuing to hire firefighters to meet our obligations for this fiscal year to be at the most efficient level of staffing. We are also getting those folks trained. We are working with other agencies to make sure that we have a total fire-fighting workforce that will be prepared. We are getting private folks trained, wood workers and mill workers for example. We're getting equipment signed up. We're getting our air tankers as well as our engines ready and we are getting more engines and getting more air tankers under contract. So I think that we are doing things that I believe need to be done to put ourselves in the best position to be able to deal with this fire season.

Senator CRAIG. How much actual dissemination of information has gone out to the public at the local level—let's say on a ranger-district-community-forest basis?

Chief BOSWORTH. Well, I'm sure that it depends on individual communities. You know, like most of our programs, it may be more in one community and less in another. However, I think there's been an awful lot of information in newspapers, in discussions at community meetings with county commissioners about the national fire plan, about that particular forest or district's implementation of it. So I think there's a fair amount of information that has been going out. I'm sure that we can find exceptions out there where it's not as good as we would like, but in the traveling around that I have done prior to coming to this job, it appeared to me there's an awful lot of information getting out there.

Senator CRAIG. Good. My last question today, Chief—and we chatted about some yesterday—in the first hearing before the committee to review the fiscal-1996 budget, the then-Secretary Dan Glickman promised the committee, promised me, an analysis of the conflicts in the laws and regulations that govern the management of the national forests, along with recommendations about what should be changed. I've spent a good many hours seated here, in hearing after hearing, trying to analyze how we best remedy the current formula that seems to result in substantial conflict.

Jack Ward Thomas put considerable effort into producing that report. It was completed, but its release was suppressed by the Clinton White House, I think, largely because the mantra at that time was not to involve those of us in the policy-making end of things, but to be able to try to govern by regulation. And, of course, we saw that effort go forward.

For the record of this hearing, could you provide the committee with a copy of this report? Also, if you choose, please feel free to update the report to reflect the passage of time or any thoughts you might have as to the remedies to those kinds of conflicts.

Chief BOSWORTH. I still have never seen a copy of that analysis, and we have been looking for a copy of it. I've been told that someone thinks they have access to a copy. I do want to get it, and I would like to look at it and see if it does need some updating and some additional things, and I would like to provide it to you. So if we can find it, we'll plan on doing that.

Senator CRAIG. Sure. Well, I think that would be a valuable thing not only to look at, but, as I said, to update, to be able to use it as a reference point to go forward, to see if, in fact, there needs to some policy adjustment that this Congress could agree on that would allow you and the Forest Service to be a more effective unit.

[The following was received for the record:]

The analysis of the conflicts in the laws and regulations that govern the management of the National Forests, along with recommendations about what should be changed, is currently being reviewed and will be provided as soon as it is available for release.

Senator CRAIG. With that, Chief, let me thank you and your colleagues for being here today. I'm sure that, over the course of the next good number of years, you will be before this committee and the subcommittee on more than one occasion. This Congress puts a high priority on our national forests, as does our public, as I know you do, and we all recognize the environment in which they now are and the difficulties that that results in. So we will work with you to see if we can't improve our forests generally across the country. Again, thank you.

And the full committee will stand adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:13 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]